

# local & state

## CHARITY

Celebrity chef and famous singer provide unforgettable night



LeAnn Rimes performs at a private show Saturday following a dinner prepared by chef Tom Colicchio at a home in Port Royal in Naples. AMANDA INSCORE/THE NEWS-PRESS

## It's Rimes and dine: Donors get a show

By Annabelle Tometich

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What can \$1.2 million buy?

A 3,850-square-foot waterfront home in southwest Cape Coral, a Rolls-Royce Phantom Coupe, a small-scale wind turbine – or, if you're one of 152 lucky bidders from the 2012 Naples Winter Wine Festival: One memorable evening.

The top-grossing auction lot from January's charity event, which raised more than \$12 million for the Naples Children & Education Foundation, the \$1.2 million night took place at a beachfront estate in the exclusive Naples community of Port Royal. Admission included a five-course dinner prepared by celebrity chef Tom Colicchio,

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as well as performances by country star LeAnn Rimes and the British group Blake.

"It's a remarkable set of children supported by the Naples Children & Education Foundation," said Bob Clifford, who hosted the event with his wife, Joan, along with Gillian Campbell and Michael DeGroot Sr. "The proceeds raised from this event will

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# Rimes

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support more than 150,000 at-risk and underprivileged children.”

That’s about 1,000 kids per attendee. Not bad for tickets that averaged almost \$8,000 each.

The price covered a meal full of caviar, ricotta agnolotti and rare white truffles shaved ever-so carefully by Colicchio. Colicchio had a hand in most every dish, cutting perfect slices of hamachi for the first course, and carefully placing roasted root vegetables atop plates of braised short ribs for the final.

Rimes took the stage at 9:48 p.m., kicking off the hourlong set with her 2007 hit “Nothin’ Better To Do,” before offering the audience a first listen to her soon-to-be-released single “Spitfire” off her forthcoming spring album of the same name.

Rimes has been in Florida the last few days, for what she half-seriously referred to as a “philanthropy tour.”

“It doesn’t feel like work,” said Rimes, 30.



**About 150 people attended a dinner prepared Saturday by chef Tom Colicchio and a private concert by Blake and LeAnn Rimes.** AMANDA INSCORE/THE NEWS-PRESS

“The people are wonderful and the kids that this money directly goes to, I saw them today and it was so nice. ... I don’t often get to see where the money is going.”

For attendees, know-

ing their donations were going to a good cause was the largest part of the night’s appeal.

“I’m not really a country music fan, but I love good music,” said Naples real estate developer

Scott Lutgert. “The main thing is, this is a way we can give some money, help a charity and have some fun too.”

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